— facilitating through bilateral consultations, the rapid utilisation of debt owed to Russia, in the form of exports of goods; a separate agreement on long-term purchase of specific goods has been signed.

— promotion of direct business contacts through exchange of delegations, holding of exhibitions, participation in fairs, buyer-seller meets etc.

— encouragement of initiatives to ensure that infra-structure is quickly created for trade in areas such as banking, warehousing and transportation (through the Russian Black Sea Port of Novorossisk).

(c) and (d) During the meeting of the Working Group on Trade and Economic Cooperation under the aegis of Indo-Russian Joint Commission held in Moscow in July, 1994, it was decided to have a long term perspective plan for purchase of certain items such as tea, tabacco, soyabean meals and pharmaceuticals. As a follow-up, an agreement has been signed between the two sides in December, 1994 during Russian Prime Minister's visit for annual purchase in India by Russia of the following commodities under the Debt Repayment Route during the period 1995—97 :—

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. Tobacco | 20,000 MTs. |
| 2. Tea | 30,000 MTs. |
| 3. Soyabean meal | 1,00,000 MTs. |
| 4. Pharmaceuticals Valued at US $ | 100 MT. |

**Complaints regarding quality of Exported Marine Products**

7621. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state: (a) whether it is a fact that the complaints regarding quality of marine producs exported have increased;

(b) if so the steps taken to maintain the quality and reduce the rejection of exported marine products; and

(c) whether the quality control will be introduced to protect market of Indian marine products?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) With increase in marine products exports and diversification of markets and products, there has been a marginal increase in quality complaints.

(b) Some initiatives taken for better quality maintenance inter-alia include :—

(i) Advising exporters and their associations on the requtrements of quality and hygenic stipulations laid down by the main importing countrtes.

(ii) Introduction of a subsidy scheme to assist processors in establishing captive peeling sheds.

(iii) Financial Assistance to preprocessors in obtaining stainless steel tables used for peeling activities.

(iv) Carrying out a suvey along with Export Inspection Council of all processing units and informig them of the requisite steps for maintaining quality control.

(v) Informing health and inspection authorities in Foreign countries of measures being taken tn India to ensure quality including inviting officials from major markets to visit processtng units in India.

(c) Yes, Sir.

**India's Share in the International Coffee Market**

7622. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minster of COMMERCE be pleased to state: (a) whether it is a fact that India accounts for less than three per cent of world trade in coffee;

(b) whether the production of coffee in India has declined from 2,12,000 tonnes in 1993-94 to 1,80,100 tonnes in 1994-95 and if so, how the export target of

1,50,000 tonnes was set for 1994-95 as against 1,10,000 tonnes in 1993-94; and

(c) whether Government have sidelined the interests of domestic consumers in pursuit of short-term gains tn export earnings, when India has no say in the highly volatile international coffee market?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) The share of India in the world frade of coffee is estimated at 3.07 per cent for the year 1994-95.

(b) The estimated production of coffee in India for 1993-94 and for 1994-95 is at 2,08,000 tonnes and 1,80,000 tonnes respectively. This variatio is due to biennial bearing tendency seen in coffee production where a peak season is normally followed by a lean crop. The target for exports for 1993-94 and 1994-95 were fixed at 1,50,000 tonnes for each year. The export target for 1994-95 was to be met from the carry over stock of 1993-94 and productton of 1994-95.

(c) No, Sir. Ensuring domestic availability of coffee has been one of the concerns of the Government. In order to improve the same, a quantitative restrictton on exports of coffee was imposed in August, 1994 which was removed on 31st Dec., 1994 after ensuring adequate domestic availability. Recently, the Government has allowed import of decaffeinated|roasted coffee under open General Licence to further improve domestic availability.

**Representation of New People on Tobacco Board**

7623. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state (a) whether Government will give representation on the tobacco Board to new people and tnterests;

(b) whether it is a fact that same interests and same people get nomination year after year; and

(c) what steps are proposed to give representation to small traders in the Tobacco Board?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINSSTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) The Tobacco Board Act, 1975 provides for appointment of 10 members representing growers dealers, manufacturers, exporters and experts in agricultural economics| tobacco marketing besides the official members and elected members from the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha Appointments of non-official members of the Tobacco Board will take into account the statutory requiremtnts and the need to give due representation to prominent persons connected with the production, marketing, manufacture and exports of tobacco and tobacco products.

**Study on Price Competittveness of Agricultural Commodities by NCAER**

7624. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that NCAER (Nattonal Council of Applied Economic Research) conducted a study on the price competitiveness of 17 selected agricultural commodities with export potential;

(b) whether the study included Indian tobacco amongst the 17 selected agricultural commodities;

(c) if so, whether NCAER gave any suggestions on utilisation of advantages inherent in Indian tobacco, including price competitiveness for export purposes. and

(d) what steps Government have taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.